

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 OMB-01 IO-14 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01

PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 EB-11 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /148 W

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R 181035Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4281

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LONDON

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PORT LOUIS 1153

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: MP PINT

SUBJECT: MAURITIUS GOVERNMENT COALITION BROKEN UP

1. UNDER SECTION 60 OF MAURITIAN CONSTITUTION, WHICH STIPULATES THAT OFFICE OF A MINISTER SHALL BECOME VACANT WHEN GOVGEN, ACTING IN ACCORD WITH ADVICE OF PRIME MINISTER, SO DIRECTS, IMPORTANT VACANCIES WERE CREATED NIGHT OF DECEMBER 17 WHEN PRIMIN RAMGOOLAM RECOMMENDED REMOVAL OF MINEXTAFF DUVAL AND THREE OTHER PMSD MINISTERS FROM THEIR POSTS. IN ADDITION DUVAL, OTHER MINISTERS SACKED BY GOVGEN'S ORDER WERE MARCHAND (COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY), LECKNING (EMPLOYMENT) AND PATTEN (MINISTER OF STATE FOR EMIGRATION IN EXTAFF). ADDITIONALLY, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES RAMLUGON, CARRIM AND OLIVER (ALL PMSD) HAD CREDENTIALS REVOKED.

2. THIS UNEXPECTED ACTION ON PART OF PRIME MINISTER HAS EFFECT OF BREAKING UP "GRAND COALITION" IN MAURITIUS. OF PMSD LEADERS, ONLY LOCAL GOVERNMENT MINISTER JEAN AH CHUEN, HEAD OF CHINESE COMMUNITY, AND NON-ELECTED ATTORNEY GENERAL, PAUL HEIN, SEEM SLATED REMAIN IN GOVERNMENT.

3. AT TIME ANNOUNCEMENT OF MINISTERIAL DISMISSALS WAS MADE,
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PRIMIN WAS HOSTING DINNER FOR VISITING SOVIET ADMIRAL MASLOV.
ALTHOUGH PM SHED NO SPECIFIC LIGHT ON REASONING BEHIND STEP HE

TOOK, HE DID TELL GUESTS, WITH SOME RELISH, THAT REMOVAL OF
PMSD MINISTERS WAS NECESSARY SINCE HE COULD NO LONGER TOLERATE
"TWO PARALLEL GOVERNMENTS" IN MAURITIUS.

4. COMMENT: DISPUTE OVER RAMPHUL AFFAIR (PORT LOUIS 1138) HAD
ALREADY CAUSED STRAINS WITHIN COALITION, AND PM, TOGETHER WITH OTHER
HINDU OFFICIALS, BELIEVED TO HAVE BECOME INCREASINGLY DISTURBED
BY DUVAL'S BACKING OF FRENCH REQUEST FOR REST CAMP IN MAURITIUS
(PORT LOUIS 0965 NOTAL), AND OTHER UNILATERAL OVERTURES FOR FRENCH
SUPPORT THAT LABOR PARTY FEELS MIGHT TEND UPSET FRAGILE ETHNIC/
POLITICAL BALANCE HERE. DUVAL HAD ALSO VOICED OPPOSITION TO INCOME
TAX MEASURE THAT GOVERNMENT BELIEVED NECESSARY TO RESTRAIN INFLA-
TION.

5. REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER BREAK IN COALITION WILL BE LASTING;
SOME INDICATIONS SHOULD SURFACE AT TODAY'S LEGISLATIVE AS-
SEMBLY SESSION WHEN PMSD WILL FUNCTION ONCE MORE, AND FOR FIRST
TIME IN THREE YEARS, AS OPPOSITION PARTY.
SULLIVAN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PORTL01153
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PORT LOUIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731218/aaaaanfg.tel
Line Count: 80
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10-Jan-2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <31-Jan-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MAURITIUS GOVERNMENT COALITION BROKEN UP
TAGS: PINT, MP
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005